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TRENDS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING IN PART-TIME LEARNING

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TRENDS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING IN PART-TIME LEARNING

Introduction

This report was prepared as an initial response to the need for a framework for planning and decision-making in the Part-Time Learning (PTL) department at TVOntario. Such a framework can provide a rationale for:

- Making programming decisions on the basis of educational need and audiences to be served in a long-term perspective;
- Balancing efforts aimed at retaining present audiences and attracting new audiences;
- Consideration of alternative support materials, possible community links, coproduction partners, and funding sources.

To aid in the development of this framework, Development Research was asked to provide information on the trends most likely to affect Ontarians in the next three to five years. A number of trends have been identified under the general headings of:

- Economic
- Political
- Social/Personal/Leisure
- Culture/Science/Technology

Each of these trends has been further examined to ascertain the influences it might have on the lives of individuals and, in some cases, communities. This analysis allows the trend to be considered in individual terms and, consequently, related to potential learning. The final section under each trend then presents ideas for programs that might provide Ontarians with the skills and knowledge they may need to function in our changing society.

This report can be used in developing a mix of programming that will meet a variety of individual needs over a period of several years. It is a reference document, an overview, to facilitate the preparation and consideration of proposals for production. The information in this report can be considered, in conjunction with the audience/participant analysis from Market Research, and further research in the development of a long-range plan for Part-Time Learning.

ECONOMIC TRENDS: THE WORLD OF WORK

There are three trends which are having a significant impact on the labour market. These trends are not all new to Part-Time Learning as learning systems have already been created in response to some of them. However, these trends will continue to be significant, factors requiring additional educational and training responses. These three trends are:

- Technological change
- Demographic change
- Change in the economic base

It is now generally accepted that these are vital factors in the unemployment rate of 10% which is projected to remain the same, even if there is an upturn in the economy.

In response to these changes, the federal and provincial governments have developed new training and education initiatives. The Ontario government recently announced its new Ontario Training Strategy which may provide funding potential for PTL. These initiatives are:

- Training Consulting Service: Budget of $15 million with $1.5 million allocated to the development of training and support materials;

- Training Incentive Program: Budget of $33 million to subsidize direct training costs including learning materials. This program is intended to benefit small- and medium-sized business;

- Trades Upgrading Program: Budget of $4 million;

- Access Program: Budget of $25 million to help individuals upgrade primary job-entry skills and work-related literacy and math skills;

- Skills Training Institute: Budget of $6 million to develop training products and provide professional development courses for training consultants and instructors.

The Ministry of Skills Development, which is overseeing this program, expects that over the next five years more than one million workers will benefit.

Consideration should be given to the design of new learning systems in this area to ensure that they complement and interlock with each other. The person facing job dislocation could choose from a variety of materials which address his or her needs for learning about the labour market, career/job change, as well as the ins and outs of training and education.

Although the present day schedule is entirely filled with programming for schools, consideration could be given to daytime broadcasts for adults who are experiencing dislocation due to labour market changes.

Cooperation and collaboration with community institutions and agencies, both public and private, could enhance the quality and utilization of learning systems. It might be worth examining the British and Michigan experiments to link viewers to community resources and agencies designed to help people adversely affected by labour market changes.

TREND: TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE--THE ONGOING INCREASE OF COMPUTERS AND COMPUTER-RELATED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WORKPLACE CONTINUES TO TRANSFORM THE NATURE AND MANNER OF WORK.

Implications for the Individual

The demand for many human skills is 'lost' as computers are introduced to perform many mid-level job functions such as tellers, accountants, supply purchasers; therefore, there are fewer and fewer middle-level workers.

People will need recurrent training and education to adapt to changing work processes as new technologies are introduced. Hospitals now provide continuous in-service education which may be the precursor of what will happen in many workplaces.

Individuals will need to have a basic understanding of the technologies affecting the workplace in order to be able to predict or at least understand the changes underway. The 1986 report of the Automotive Industries Human Resources Task Force notes that:

- Both workers and managers must master more skills than ever before including those not expected of them in the past;

- Both must use these skills more frequently in their daily work and must adapt them more often to changing situations.

A recent study done by the Ministry of Skills development estimates that by the time a person is 40 years old, they will have had eight jobs.

Programming Ideas

- The Changing Workplace. Case Studies which examine the experience of technological change in a wide variety of workplaces. These studies would identify the way work was transformed as well as actions of employees and managers that were helpful. There is potential for cooperation with the Centre for Productivity and Labour Market Development (proposal in ODR). Labour Canada is funding a continuing series of studies through the Technology Impact Research Fund on the nature of change in many different industries and employment sectors.

- Emerging Occupations/Emerging Careers. Descriptions of jobs in growth areas which identify the skills involved as well as the ways to become involved. Jobs could be presented according to labour market sector so that a complete picture of the labour market can be conveyed. However, each program in itself could be short (15 minutes) and capable of standing alone without any supplementary material.

- Career/Life Planning for a Changing Workworld. This learning system would not just deal with career change but would put the changes in the context of the whole labour market as well as technological change. Materials could be piggybacked and tied into other work-based learning systems such as Emerging Occupations and Changing Workplaces. This package would focus on building skills necessary to assess one's abilities, knowledge, and experience, and link this assessment to the current labour market. How to use counsellors and community resources as well as how to seek and use labour market information would be included.

TREND: DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE--WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE LABOUR FORCE WILL CONTINUE TO GROW.

In 1970, 38% of women over the age of 15 were in the workforce. By 1983, this number had increased to 53% and is expected to reach 57% by 1995. Studies demonstrate the economic necessity of two incomes, as well as the large numbers of sole-support mothers.

Increasingly mothers are continuing to work after the births of their children. Statistics Canada reports that in 1985, 53% of women with children were in the labour force; 62% of women with children age three-to-five years, and 69% with children age six to 15.

Enrolment of women in professional schools such as law, medicine, and business, is now often equal with men. It is expected that this will have an impact on the way these professions are evolving.

The Canadian Business Quarterly has written about the "rise of female capitalism." The Canadian Federation of Independent Business estimates that two-thirds of business start-ups in Canada in 1984 were started by women and that at the end of 1984, almost half of the business owners in Canada were estimated to be women.

During the period 1984-88, about 144,300 persons, an average of 28,900 per year, are expected to enter Ontario's labour force from the 'household sector'. This group of women is also called re-entry women. Their distribution by level of education is as follows:

- About 6% with a university degree (1,600 persons);
- About 9% with a college diploma or certificate (2,700 persons per year);
- About 85% with less than postsecondary (24,600 persons per year).

Implications for Individuals

The demands of childbirth and nurturing will mean that most mothers' career/work paths will be significantly different than men's. Many mothers will experience staggered careers, with several stages of their lives during which they will do full-time work, part-time work, flexible hours, no outside work. Women need to know how and where to re-enter the workforce as well as the potential disadvantages of their absence.

Women's style of working and managing is often seen as different from men's. Some think that women must adapt to the male culture of the workplace, while others believe that the workplace is being changed by the participation of women.

As more mothers participate in the paid workforce, the care and raising of children is changing, creating new problems and challenges for parents, governments, and employers alike.

Pay equity and affirmative action are of vital importance. A recent survey by FOCUS CANADA reports that 95% of Ontario residents support legislation regarding pay equity. Pay equity and access to employment will be considered in a separate trend later in this section.

Programming Ideas

- The Challenge of Re-entry. Case studies of re-entry women in a variety of job sectors and also as independent entrepreneurs. These case studies could identify strategies for re-entry, ways to retrieve old skills and identify new ones, and ways to determine where they can be applied.

- Parenting and Work. Programs would consider the conflicting demands of children and employers; how mothers and fathers can best cope with these, how parents have found suitable child care arrangements, and how employers can respond to the needs of employees with young children. Support could link parents to local resources for help and networking.

- The Androgynous Manager. Profiles of women who are working 'differently' in a male world/culture and the value of the differences. Profiles of women in medicine, law, accounting, engineering, architecture, etc., and the perspectives they bring.

TREND: STRUCTURAL CHANGE IN THE ECONOMY--OUR ECONOMY HAS MOVED AWAY FROM ONE BASED ON RESOURCE EXTRACTION AND THE CREATION OF PRODUCTS TO A 'SERVICE' ECONOMY.

Our economy is now dominated by industries that perform services rather than produce goods. The service sector now employs two-thirds of all Ontario workers.

The following job openings by market sector are projected for the period 1984-88:

- Resource-based industries: 1.6% of job openings;
- Manufacturing, construction, utilities: 1.3% of job openings;
- Service: 94.6% of job openings.

Albrecht and Zemke in Service America divide jobs in the service sector into five categories:

- Unskilled personal services, e.g., housekeeping, janitor;
- Skilled personal services: services which support the needs of a complex society, e.g., government, education, medical service; artisans, shopkeepers, wholesale and retail merchants; repair and maintenance people;
- Industrial services: services offered by legal and accounting firms, banks and insurance firms, real estate brokers, and trading companies. Also called professional services;
- Mass consumer services: related to accommodating a growing consumer demand for discretionary services, e.g, hotel, airlines, travel services, dining, entertainment;
- High technology business services: the introduction of microchips, lasers, satellites, bioengineering, and the like create opportunities for large advances in both the creation of new services and the streamlining of existing ones.

Implications for Individuals

The skills required to work in this sector are different from those required by workers in the resource and manufacturing industries. In addition, higher level literacy and numeracy skills are required both for the available jobs and for retraining. The Ontario government's new funding for training makes this explicit. The report states: "As the service sector continues to grow, people must be equipped with the skills they need to excel there. Government must respond to these new realities by encompassing services in its training priorities."

Individuals will need skills and attitudes that will allow them to choose and participate in retraining and education that will enhance their worklife.

Programming Ideas

- The New Concept of Service. Working in the Service Sector. The concepts of Information Industry and Service Sector could be concretized to enable people to really understand the kinds of work in these areas. For example, The Information Industry could be examined to define what information science is, what an information system is, and the kinds of jobs involved. There could be short vignettes on each of the occupations. Programs could demonstrate the broadened concept of service as articulated by Albrecht and Zemke. The use of technology in these occupations and how their use effects the nature of the work that is done in each occupation could be defined. Potential for funding from the Training Consulting Service Training Strategy of the Ontario Government.

- A Guide to Education/Training. A user's guide based on case studies of individuals who have been successful in efforts of retraining and reeducation. The following issues and problems could be covered in this series:

  - Decision-making for training: what, when, how, and who pays;
  - The characteristics of good training;
  - Linking training to the workplace;
  - The range in individuals' preferred ways of learning;
  - How to study using print materials, television, film, and audiocassette.

The potential for cooperation with the Worker's Education Association and other community agencies involved in adult education and counselling about retraining, such as Canada Employment and Immigration, as well as community colleges, could be explored. In addition, community-based agencies that provide support to the unemployed such as the Canadian Mental Health Association and the YM/YWCA might be interested in cooperation.

There is potential for funding for these program from the Skills Training Institute. Coproduction and production in both languages could be considered.

- Literacy/Numeracy. Programs for literacy tutors on how to work effectively with adult learners. Profiles of an individual's struggle to learn and interviews with successful literacy students identifying what was helpful/not helpful. Examples of effective one-to-one communication in a variety of settings in which a variety of materials and methodologies are used.

  Instructional materials for adults on basic concepts in numeracy. The video portions could be short (15 minutes).

- Literacy in the Workplace. Frontier College is sponsor of the Canadian Business Task Force on Literacy which is working to create awareness of the problems of illiteracy in the workplace and also to provide support for the establishment of literacy education in the workplace. The potential for cooperation with this group to create series for managers and business owners could be explored.

  ACCESS Alberta is currently producing a series of up to 20 10-15 minute broadcast-quality modules for literacy tutors and vocational school instructors. The tapes are designed to be used in tutor training workshops. Two pilot programs have been produced for testing, one for one-on-one tutoring and one for literacy groups or classes. The possibility exists for the series to be packaged into one half-hour segment. A self-study handbook has also been designed and produced to accompany the series. Potential for funding from the Ontario Access Program.

TREND: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES ARE CHANGING FROM HIERARCHICAL STRUCTURES TO 'FLATTER' STRUCTURES WITH FEWER MID-MANAGEMENT LEVELS AND DECENTRALIZED CONTROL AND SUPERVISION.

This trend is already evident and is expected to accelerate which means that traditional career paths of 'moving up' will not be relevant. The trend is occurring as a result of technological change primarily.

The Ontario Manpower Commission projects that for the period 1984-88, the largest number of job openings will be for those in what is classified as the lowest skill area (54%), while the smallest will be for those in the middle skill area (12%), with the next in the highest skill area (34%). High skill area is defined as that which requires specific vocational training of over six months and low skill area is that which requires less than six months of training, and less than postsecondary education.

Naisbitt in "Reinventing the Corporation," reports that worldwide, middle management has shrunk more than 15% since 1979. Bell Canada eliminated this year some 2,000 mid-management jobs. The American Management Association describes the corporation of the future in the following way: "By the year 2000, the typical corporation will be two or three individuals with many lines to vendors. The company will employ a lot of people on a part-time, consulting basis. It will not be necessary to pay yearly salaries and fringe benefits."

Implications for Individuals

The manager's new role will be to act as coach, teacher, and mentor as the former role of keeping track of information and people will be subsumed by the computer. Therefore, there will be a need to learn the skills of developing staff.

Companies will turn to contract labour and individuals will have to learn to work on a consultant, freelance basis. There will be many more companies that 'lease' people on a project basis drawing from a talent pool of employees and individuals will have to learn to work on a project, one-shot basis. The old values of loyalty to a company will be replaced by loyalty to the quality of one's work in order to make it saleable.

Working in small work groups or teams is most appropriate to the new corporate structure, which may require the learning of skills of team work and collaboration, as opposed to competition.

Individuals who are able to be creative and innovative in their approaches will be rewarded. This will require the ability to take risks and to be imaginative, as well as the ability to 'sell' one's innovations to the appropriate people.

Programming Ideas

- New Management Styles. Management development programs that provide instruction on the new management styles of being coach, teacher, mentor. Case studies of 'new style' managers and interviews with their staff to identify the requisite skills and knowledge.

- The Innovators. Programs that profile people who are seen as innovators and unique problem solvers. These programs would demonstrate how companies both large and small facilitate and reward innovation. Such programming would serve to highlight the characteristics of innovative thinking and problem solving and would also demonstrate how it can be built into our repertoire of behaviours. In addition, the necessity for such behaviour in these times of rapid change would be emphasized.

- Self-Management Skills. The new organizational structure will require that individuals are capable of managing their time, their work flow, their work projects on their own. These and other workplace skills seen as important in the new organization are similar to those required of small business owners; these are the ability to 'sell' one's expertise as a consultant as well as the ability to work in collaborative work teams.

TREND: SMALL BUSINESS WILL BE THE MAJOR SOURCE OF EMPLOYMENT.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business states that the small business sector is responsible for at least 70% of all new job creation. Its study states that the fastest rate of job creation occurs among young, small firms under 20 employees and that in the period 1975-80, the smaller businesses under 50 employees were the only ones to afford substantial relative job creation.

Reports by both the provincial and federal departments of industry and commerce indicate that entrepreneurship is seen as the key to economic success in the 1990's. There are several initiatives underway at both levels in order to support the development and expansion of small business. In Ontario, the Ministry of Trade and Technology has funded seven Enterprise Centres at various locations throughout the province which serve to support local entrepreneurship by providing low-cost space and office support as well as advice and counsel on issues and problems in small business start-up and operation.

The number of women small business owners has risen dramatically and is expected to continue to rise. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business estimates that in 1984, two-thirds of business start-ups were by women and that currently half of the business owners in Canada are women.

Implications for Individuals

It is generally accepted that the skills required for the successful start-up and operation of small business are very different than those required for a trade or for employment in a large organization or in an organization in which one has no financial interest. Studies show that the following skills are essential to successful entrepreneurship:

- The ability to create, adapt, and successfully communicate new ideas;
- The ability to acquire, process, and evaluate information;
- The ability to engage in more cooperative, collaborative management and work styles.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business states that for success, new owners must be prepared to offer employees minority participation in their companies and even a share in managing them.

New Canadians operating family businesses must acclimatize themselves to Canadian business realities. In addition, family businesses have problems that are unique. The BBC is currently offering learning systems to a comparable clientele in Britain.

Programming Ideas

PTL has provided excellent material for new business start-ups and there are many other subject areas relating to small business operation that could be covered. The following subject areas have been suggested as needs by representatives from the Ministry of Trade and Technology.

- How to Manage and Motivate Staff. High staff turnover is being seen as an expensive problem in the retail and food service industries. It is suggested that any programming in this area be tailored to suit each particular segment of the market. For example, retail, food service, hotel.

- Expert Help: Knowing How and When to Get It. Selecting the right person; monitoring and paying for it.

- Business Expansion. Advantages and disadvantages; costs and benefits; timing.

- Marketing Strategies. How to choose marketing services or strategies; what to pay; how to determine cost/benefit.

- Consulting Skills for the Self-Employed. Selling your expertise and ideas.

- Risk-Taking.

- Time Management.

- Recruiting, Interviewing, and Selecting Staff.

TREND: ALTERNATIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WILL GROW IN IMPORTANCE IN COMMUNITIES AFFECTED BY ECONOMIC CHANGE.

There has been significant growth in community economic development schemes to counter the effects of business and economic reversals. There have been several projects in this province in the last few years. One of the largest and most successful is the Learning Enrichment Foundation in the municipality of York. Large projects are underway in Sudbury, Project 2001, as well as in Sault Ste. Marie and Thunder Bay. Many of these are funded by grants from the Ministry of Trade and Technology and the Ministry of Northern Affairs.

Premier Peterson, as well as Prime Minister Mulroney have recently made important policy statements to the effect that people who live in disadvantaged regions due to changing economic patterns and the decline of resource industries will be expected to devise ways and means to help themselves. These governments will look to communities to take initiatives and will work "closely with the local and regional business milieu, because they really know exactly how and what should be spent" (Federal Speech from the Throne, October 2, 1986). Peterson made a comparable statement in a recent visit to northern communities adversely affected by the slump in the resource industries.

The Canadian Association for Adult Education reports this trend to be one of central importance and is currently funding Canada-wide conferences to allow people to learn from the experiences of others, both Canadian (West and East Coast) and internationally.

Community economic development schemes are often marked by alternative work arrangements such as worker co-ops and collaborative efforts between business and labour, all of which reflect different attitudes and work arrangements. There are several lobby groups currently working at the provincial level to make provincial labour and business laws more conducive to the establishment of alternative business arrangements. These groups point to the changes in comparable laws in Quebec and British Columbia which have lead to a greater variety of business and work arrangements.

Implications for Individuals

Many community-based business projects or worker-led projects require people to exercise leadership and initiative which often requires that the individual learn these skills.

Many new work arrangements require people to work in new non-competitive ways. These are new work styles to many who must understand the skills underlying them.

People in communities need information on how these initiatives have worked elsewhere and what might be useful for them to attempt in their circumstances.

Programming Ideas

- Taking Charge: Successful Community Initiatives. Co-productions with other agencies which document the process of community development in various Ontario towns. It would be important that this type of programming makes very explicit the kinds of obstacles encountered and the solutions found, as well as the knowledge and skills required of people involved. There are several initiatives in community development occurring very close by (York and Hamilton), as well as several agencies set up to facilitate these initiatives.

  There is currently an initiative underway to prepare distance education materials for economic development training for small, remote communities in Alberta and British Columbia. The potential for cooperation could be explored.

- Exploring Alternatives: Community Development Abroad. PTL might purchase documentaries which have already been produced, for example, Mondrogan, a BBC production about a large, successful community development project in Basque, Spain. Support materials could be provided to link this experience to the Canadian situation. Production of handbooks detailing the mechanics of success would be required.

TREND: ONTARIO'S LIBERAL GOVERNMENT IS SUPPORTING MOVES TOWARD EMPLOYMENT AND PAY EQUITY.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms enacted in 1982, the Abella Report of 1984, and the federal Bill C-62 scheduled to become effective in June 1988, all support equal access to jobs and equal pay for equal work. Over 60% of the population--including women, visible and ethnic minorities, the disabled, and native Canadians stand to benefit from government efforts to open access to jobs and encourage equal pay. In Ontario, a bill on pay equity in the provincial civil service has received second reading and there are plans to introduce a similar bill for the private sector this fall.

In a 1986 Environics survey, 57% of Ontarians express 'a great deal' of concern about equal pay for women and a further 30% express 'some concern'. The proportion showing 'a great deal' of concern rises to 65% among women, 70% among full-time working women, and 74% among women working part-time. In addition to the question of pay equity, there are problems with discrimination against women, visible and ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities in recruiting and hiring workers.

The Ontario Women's Directorate has chosen a small number of companies to monitor the changes they are implementing for pay equity. These companies will share information with the Directorate on their initiatives which will provide the Directorate with a valuable database from which to advise future companies.

Implications for Individuals

Moves to introduce pay equity and improve hiring practices can eventually affect up to 60% of the workforce directly, in particular, women, visible minorities, and the handicapped.

In the short term, those who are being underpaid and those responsible for developing and implementing personnel policy and practices will be most concerned.

Programming Ideas

- Introducing Pay Equity and Fair Employment Practices. Programs would look at similar changes in other jurisdictions such as Quebec, Manitoba, Minnesota, and Australia, and show individual work situations, in Ontario when possible, that illustrate:

- Current discriminatory personnel recruitment and hiring practices, especially subtle ones, and show equitable alternatives;

- Job evaluation systems based on such factors as skill, effort, and responsibility that enable employers to determine the comparable value of jobs independent of gender;

- The costs involved in introducing pay equity adjustments;

- The potential benefits of pay equity in terms of morale, productivity, and economic returns;

- How to relate the implementation of pay equity to the collective bargaining process in a union situation.

All public departments and agencies, private employers who do business with the federal government, and eventually all private employers as well will need to examine their employment practices and policies and determine what, if any, changes will be needed to become equal opportunity employers. Employees will want to know their rights and what they can expect in their work situations.

TREND: VOLUNTARISM WILL CONTINUE TO PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE ECONOMY AS WELL AS IN PEOPLE'S LIVES.

It is estimated that there are 100,000 voluntary organizations in Canada, 44,000 of these being registered societies.

Not-for-profit agencies are increasingly utilized as alternatives by which people can continue to produce services, promote causes, and take action that is beneficial in social and cultural terms. As traditional sources of funding disappear due to government spending restraints, there is a greater impetus for such organizations to rely on volunteers.

The Canadian Association for Adult Education reports that in 1982, unpaid volunteer labour amounted to approximately 374 million hours or $2 billion in wages.

At the present time there are no statistics available for voluntary participation throughout the province, however, the Volunteer Centre of Metropolitan Toronto reports that in 1985, 10,000 volunteers of 486 agencies provided a total of 30,000 hours per week, worth about $15 million in wages per year.

Implications for Individuals

Individuals are seeking volunteer work as a means to keep active, to gain employment-related experience, and develop new skills while providing worthwhile service to the community. The new skills relate to service delivery and voluntary leadership. However, organization and training must be provided if the voluntary experience is to be satisfactory.

Volunteer coordinators require training in effective recruitment, training, and supervision of volunteer staff.

Programming Ideas

o Management Training in Voluntary Agencies. A 1986 report prepared for the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation specifies the training needs of executive and board volunteers. Recommended core curriculum is as follows:

- The basics of planning;
- Conducting meetings;

- How to follow-up on meetings to ensure task completion;
- Recruiting, selecting, maintaining effective volunteers;
- Building community networks and liaisons.

Additional subjects of importance are:

- Roles and responsibilities of voluntary board members;
- Budgetting basics;
- Financial management for the non-financial manager.

As volunteer agencies require the same kind of sophisticated management and information systems as do businesses, management training programs could be altered to suit the needs of the voluntary environment.

Alberta Culture is currently developing a telecourse with ACCESS Alberta on issues relating to the voluntary sector. Also, in Alberta all members of boards of voluntary agencies are required to take the Alberta Culture course in order that their agency remain eligible for future funding.

o Profiles of Voluntary Community Service. A series of programs that would explore the variety of voluntary work underway in diverse Ontario communities. Volunteering as a life-enhancing activity would be explored by examining how it has changed the lives of the volunteer, as well as the recipient. One could look at community service to the following groups:

- the elderly
- the young
- the handicapped
- the family

POLITICAL TRENDS

Interviews with researchers working for our three political parties have been the primary source for the political trends identified here.

TREND: COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGIES ENABLE PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE MORE DIRECTLY IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS.

Television coverage of Question Period in both the House of Commons and the provincial legislature enables people to follow the events on a daily basis. In addition, there is extensive media coverage of political events and personalities. However, very often viewers lack a real understanding of the political process, how decisions are made, what the work of our elected representatives actually is, and how they are elected.

Implications for Individuals

Individuals lack a sense of their own political power without a solid knowledge of how they can affect change in their world.

While media coverage enables people to be aware of the issues, often people do not have enough understanding of the political process to work effectively within it. Apart from voting in general elections or possibly writing MPs, most people have very little to do with decision making.

While the exact number of political action groups in the Province of Ontario is not possible to obtain, it is known that there are 228 environmental lobby groups alone.

Programming Ideas

- How We Are Governed. A learning system that explores the political process at the municipal, provincial, and federal level. This could be defined through case studies of important decisions as well as through profiles of politicians currently in office and those no longer in political life. The intent of this should be to personalize the political process as much as possible to enable

people to see the role they do play or could possibly play in the future.

- The Politics of Pressure. A learning system that looks at political action groups and their impact on the present political scene. The BBC will be broadcasting a series which will explore the history, aims, function, and organization of a number of British pressure and lobby groups. A Canadian version could be developed. Perhaps this would also be suitable for youth broadcast and as an application of computer conferencing.

- Profiles of Ontario Politicians. To be broadcast in conjunction with Question Period. Details of what they do, how they make decisions, how they look after their constituency needs, how they got interested in politics, and how they were elected should be explicit. Also suitable for youth broadcast.

TREND: OUR SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS FOR WEALTH DISTRIBUTION AND SOCIAL EQUITY ARE BEING INCREASINGLY CHALLENGED.

Our society is in rapid transition and many of our social and political institutions are being challenged by individuals or groups which propose radical change. For example, many are suggesting we radically alter our social security system in response to widespread and chronic unemployment. Also, our traditional medical system is increasingly under fire as medical costs soar. In education, the public system is under increasing pressure operating with fewer government dollars as are community services agencies.

Studies published in the United States and Canada document a phenomenon known as the "shrinking middle" and the development of a two-tier society. In a discussion of this trend in the Globe and Mail, October 4, 1986, this trend is described as follows: "In Canada and the United States, the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer, and the middle class is getting squeezed."

Implications for Individuals

Many are discovering through bitter experience that aspects of 'the system' are no longer working for them. They need positive examples of alternatives that are addressing the same issues and problems successfully. These alternatives could be found in other countries, communities, or just in individual actions.

Programming Ideas

- o Exploring Alternatives. A learning system that examines alternative solutions to existing social and political problems of wealth distribution, unemployment, technological change, agriculture, medicine, community services. The learner would be provided with knowledge and skills that they could apply to possible alternative solutions to problems in their own life.

TREND: SELF-HELP/MUTUAL AID WILL BECOME INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT AS SOLUTIONS TO PERSONAL AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS.

This trend is part of the Western world's so-called swing to the right. Privatization is another word to apply to this trend that sees people looking less and less to government for the solution of personal and social problems, and more and more to individuals and community groups. It ties in with the economic trend of community economic development.

Implications for Individuals

Individuals need skills of organizing, building local support, fundraising, recruiting membership in order to be successful participants in actions of mutual aid and self-help.

Programming Ideas

- Working Together. Profiles of successful mutual-aid groups to identify those actions that were helpful and those that were not in accomplishing goals of the group. Details of how community networks were formed, leadership actions of individuals that helped maintain group effectiveness, as well as the identification of helpful resources. Print materials could identify steps involved in organizing a mutual-aid group, as well as factors that are vital to the effective maintenance and actions of such a group.

SOCIAL/PERSONAL/LEISURE TRENDS

TREND: RISING DIVORCE RATES, DECREASING MARRIAGE AND FERTILITY RATES, POSTPONED MARRIAGES, POSTPONED CHILDBEARING, AND VOLUNTARY CHILDLESSNESS HAVE GIVEN RISE TO ALTERNATIVE FAMILY ARRANGEMENTS.

Implications for Individuals

Marriage rates have been on the decline for the past 15 years. By the end of the century, it is predicted that 25% of all Canadians will divorce in their lifetime. It is estimated that 75% of all people who are separated or divorced enter into new unions within a five-year period. "Couplehood" is "in," whether it be in traditional family, reconstituted family, same-sex, or opposite-sex live-in arrangements.

While the overall fertility rate has been on the decline since the early 1960s, there has been a slight upswing in fertility rates among women over 30. After 1990, when women who were part of the baby boom generation move out of the childbearing years, birth rates are expected to drop off again.

In 1981, 56.5% of census families were comprised of husband, wife, and children; 32.5% were husband, wife with no children, and 11% were single parent families. The number of single parent families is expected to increase to 13% in 2001. Women head 83% of all single parent families. Of these families, 50% live below the poverty level.

The number of persons living alone has more than doubled in the last 10 years.

Forty percent of all Canadian children have experienced divorce in their families. The suicide rate among children age 11 to 16 who are in foster care, group homes, and single parent families is much higher than that of the general population.

Programming Ideas

- The New Family. A series of programs depicting case studies of alternative family arrangements and discussion of the issues that arise within these arrangements. Issues such as the decision to marry, the decision to have children, child care, household responsibilities, and children's responsibilities could be

explored in the contexts of the single parent family, the dual career family, the voluntary childless couple, the same-sex couple, the househusband/career woman family, etc. Interviews with children living in each of these situations could provide a different perspective on what is usually considered to be an adult issue. The potential roles of government, industry, the community, and religious organizations might also be explored.

- Organizing Community Supports for the Family. How to organize community cooperatives around family needs, e.g., services for singles, child care, housework; how to coordinate counselling and workshops dealing with families in transition, new roles for men, women, and children, political advocacy in the community and in the workplace.

TREND: FAMILY VIOLENCE IS NOW RECOGNIZED AS A SOCIAL PROBLEM AND SOCIAL SERVICES ARE BEING DIRECTED TOWARD DETECTING, TREATING, AND PREVENTING ITS OCCURRENCE.

Implications for Individuals

It is estimated that one out of 10 women in Ontario is beaten by her spouse, and that women usually wait until they are beaten several times before telling anyone.

The Ontario government has initiated tougher enforcement of spousal assault in hopes of tripling the number of men convicted by 1990.

The number of reported child abuse cases in the province in June 1986 was 997, compared with 1,031 for the previous June.

It is estimated that one out of 20 preschoolers is sexually molested, usually in the home and usually at the hands of an adult the child knows.

There are 43 family service programs in large towns and cities throughout the province. The Family Service Association of Metro Toronto is the largest in Canada; 18 to 20% of its clients are victims of family violence, and there is a six-week waiting list for their family violence counselling programs.

Programming Ideas

- o Family Violence. Its causes, outward signs, and prevention. This program could be used in conjunction with community and teacher training programs aimed toward the detection and prevention of family violence, e.g., child abuse, spousal abuse, elderly abuse. Coping with drug and alcohol abuse within the family and streetproofing would be significant areas to explore in this context. Resources available within communities such as counselling services and shelters could also be highlighted. Productions have already been broadcast in other provinces (i.e., NFB's Feeling Yes, Feeling No). They were crucial in bringing forward many stories of child abuse, especially in smaller communities.

TREND: INCREASINGLY, PEOPLE SEE THEMSELVES AS ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN MAINTAINING THEIR OWN HEALTH AND PREVENTING DISEASE AND THEY ARE PURSUING A VARIETY OF OPTIONS TO ACHIEVE THIS.

Over the past 10 years there has been a change in attitudes and approaches to health care among the better educated and middle/upper classes. The emphases are now on preventative rather than curative practices, and on individual responsibility for good health in conjunction with alternative forms of health care. Most of the causes for disease have been linked to environmental and lifestyle hazards, such as pollution, smoking, drinking, nutrition, and exercise habits, and occupational health risks. The Ontario Ministry of Health has embarked on a health promotion campaign, an effort to provide citizens with the necessary information to enable them to take more control of their own health. Such a campaign will combine communications, education, legislation, fiscal measures, organizational changes, community development, and spontaneous local activities against health hazards.

In a 1985 Canada-wide survey, 70% of respondents felt they could personally do something to improve their health. Fifty-four percent mentioned exercise and 19% mentioned quitting smoking as ways to improve their health.

Implications for Individuals

People are increasingly aware of the deleterious effects smoking has on health and are taking steps to do something about this.

In Ontario, 30% of the population over 15 years of age smoke regularly. Smoking rates are highest among men aged 25-44 and women aged 20-24. In 1983, 40% of the smokers in Ontario over the age of 15 attempted to quit, with about 20% success rate. This trend was positively related to education and was more pronounced among women.

In a 1986 survey of employees of Health and Welfare Canada, 80% believed the Department should provide smoking cessation programs for those who wish to quit. Fifty-six percent of the smokers said they would enroll in a smoking cessation program if they were made available, and 62% of the smokers said they would reduce their smoking or attempt to quit if workplace restrictions on smoking were introduced.

Smoke cessation programs are being introduced into the workplace more and more, and have a higher success rate than clinic-based programs.

Demand for the services of alternative health care practitioners such as chiropractors is growing. The number of licenced chiropractors in Ontario has doubled in the last 10 years to meet this demand. In Ontario, 700,000 to 800,000 people use chiropractors. OHIP payments for chiropractors have increased over 40% in the last three years.

Programming Ideas

- Healthy Lifestyles. A series of programs that looks at ways to alter our eating, working, living, and fitness habits to improve our overall health and well-being. How to shop for and prepare foods rich in nutrients; how to cut down on stress; how to design or choose a personal fitness program; how to maintain motivation to continue. Funding could come from the Ontario Ministry of Health, or Foodland Ontario.

- Quitting Smoking. Profiles of people who quit, detailing how they did it, and why it worked. How to organize, coordinate, and lead a smoking cessation program in your community or workplace; or before the fact: how to design an anti-smoking educational program for young teenagers in your school/community. Canada Health and Welfare might be interested in funding such resources as might several industrial associations.

- Healthy Cities. A coproduction opportunity in conjunction with Channel 4 in the United Kingdom and other European broadcasting agencies. Each producer is responsible for producing one program on the environmental, economic, social, and/or planning issues of large cities in their country. The programs from each country will make up an international, comparative series to which each broadcaster/producer will have the transmission rights. The series can be used as part of an educational package in schools, colleges, and universities. Funding could come from the individual municipalities involved.

TREND: PEOPLE ARE LIVING LONGER, HEALTHIER, AND MORE PRODUCTIVE LIVES.

The growing proportion of older people in Ontario and Canada has been attributed to increased longevity, declining birth rates, and changing patterns of immigration. People over 65 now comprise 10% of the population of Ontario. This number is expected to rise to 12% by 1990, 13% by 2000, and 21% by 2031 when the tail end of the baby boom generation turns 65. These seniors are expected to be healthier, better educated, and live to an average age of 80 for men and 82 for women. In 1981, the average life expectancy for men was 72 and for women, 79. The majority of people currently over 65 have, on the average, less than a grade nine education.

Approximately 90% of the elderly in Canada live in private homes, not nursing homes or institutions, so they remain part of the community and require community-based services in the areas of home care, health and nutrition, recreation, and social life. Thirty-six percent of elderly women live alone, compared to only 14% of elderly men. Approximately five percent of elderly persons live with non-relatives, and three percent live in collective households, although this number appears to be growing, as older people strive to remain outside institutions and homes.

Seniors have the largest amount of leisure time of all other age groups (approximately 43 hours per week). They need assistance making the best of their time so that they don't become bored, despondent, and isolated.

Retirement from paid work poses a great many challenges to individuals and to the lifestyles and relationships of older married couples.

Work, whether paid or voluntary, is a valuable use of leisure time. It helps older people feel needed and allows them to make an important contribution to their community and society as a whole.

As the proportion of seniors grows, increased demands will be placed on government and community services to fulfill the special needs of this sector of the population. The support functions of the family traditionally available to seniors are eroding as highly mobile young families seek opportunities in other communities and separate themselves from the older generation. The movement of women back into the workforce also reduces a traditional source of care for the elderly.

Programming Ideas

o Retirement Planning. Programming to raise individual awareness of important issues for consideration, i.e.:

- The rights of the older worker in relation to mandatory retirement;
- Finances--pension, investments, etc.;
- Leisure--personal interests and hobbies, work (volunteer and paid) and recreation;
- Health and nutrition;
- Changing family relationships and roles;
- Resources available within the community to serve needs in these areas.

This type of program could appeal to anyone over 40 who is concerned about their future, as well as to the families of people near retirement.

o Changing Concepts of Aging. Programs that deal with special issues of aging, whether physiological changes, psychological changes, psycho-social issues, or economic issues. These programs would provide solid information about current thinking on these issues. Print materials could refer people to community resources relevant to each subject area. Perhaps one or two programs could be developed per year to form part of a series. This series might be linked to The Best Years and be designed as subsequent editions to it.

This program would be of general interest to all ages and would serve to enlighten the general population and professionals in training about the needs of this group and the implications for our society.

TREND: NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN THE HOME AND WORKPLACE AND THE ATTAINMENT OF HIGHER LEVELS OF EDUCATION ARE INDIRECTLY CREATING MORE LEISURE TIME FOR THE MIDDLE AND UPPER MIDDLE CLASSES.

People, particularly those in the 25-45 year age groups, are spending more time and more money ($10 billion yearly) on leisure activities and equipment. Among the wider population, higher participation levels have been found in social, creative, and cultural activities than in sports, fitness, and outdoor pursuits. It is estimated that 80% of leisure time is spent in the home watching television, listening to the radio or music, reading, visiting with friends or talking on the telephone, home improvement, and gardening.

Nevertheless, a fitness boom has occurred over the past 10 years. People have become more conscious of physical fitness as an important component of good health. The Canadian government has used advertising campaigns and special fitness programming to promote "participation" among its constituents. The fields of leisure counselling and leisure education have grown out of a demand for assistance in dealing with increased leisure time.

Implications for Individuals

Walking is the most frequently mentioned physical activity among all age groups. In June 1984, 1.7 million adults in Ontario reported walking for physical exercise at least once a week. Swimming is the second most popular sport in summer; calisthenics is second in winter.

Cycling is a growing phenomenon, as people are re-discovering it as a good form of exercise, touring, and an activity for the whole family. About three million people in Ontario ride a bicycle. The Ontario Cycling Association boasts 3,500 members, up from 1,500 in 1984. Two-thirds of this membership cycle for fun and fitness, while the remaining third train to race. The Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Recreation is supporting the development of cycling as a competitive sport in preparation for the 1988 Olympics. Competitive cycling is expected to be introduced into school and community recreation programs within the next two-to-three years.

Bicycle sales in Canada exceed 1.2 million last year, more than automobiles. People who own bicycles tend to have higher levels of education and reside in houses. There are 325,000 adult cyclists in the city of Toronto. Bicycle traffic in the city has increased 300% in the last 10 years, compared to 38% for motor vehicle traffic. Bicycle tours throughout the province are sponsored by the Ontario Cycling

Association and by private bicycle stores. Bicycle safety and maintenance clinics are also offered by these groups.

Outdoor activities such as camping, canoeing, white-water rafting, and windsurfing are also popular. Ownership of tents increased 80% between 1971 and 1982, and that of canoes and rowboats increased 100% and 110% respectively. About 5.5 million people visited Ontario's provincial parks in the summer of 1984.

Amateur hockey has been a popular pastime in Ontario for children and adults of all ages. Good facilities are available throughout the province for both competitive and recreational play. There are 70,000 registered competitive hockey players in Ontario, and 200,000 recreational players. In 1985, 30% of all adults in Ontario participated in amateur hockey as either a spectator, coach, manager, trainer, or administrative volunteer.

Recreational sports require volunteer coaches. Training programs for coaches are highly structured. Parents of younger players are most likely to volunteer to be coaches. It is more difficult to recruit volunteers to coach older teams. Recruiting volunteers to coach baseball is also a problem, mainly because 25-40 year-olds are still playing the game, and are not interested in coaching. Coaching clinics are run by the Ontario Baseball Association.

By 1988-89, the federal government will only finance national sports organizations if they represent both men and women in sport.

Programming Ideas

- Explore Ontario. This program could reach out to a wide range of audiences who share an interest in outdoor activities, whether it be walking, swimmming, windsurfing, cycling, canoeing, sailing, camping, birdwatching, etc. The series of programs could be location-based, illustrating the many activities possible in various scenic areas of the province, or the programs would alternate among a range of activities, i.e., one on bicycling, another on walks and hikes, another on camping and canoeing. Tips on equipment and maintenance, physical training and safety, and community resources could also be included. This type of programming would provide useful information to those who are active in these sports in addition to offering a travelogue of our province. Funding could be obtained from the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation, the Ministry of National Resources, Northern Affairs, and perhaps manufacturers of sports equipment. Tapes of the programs could be distributed to community recreation centres throughout the province. Perhaps private travel agencies would be

interested in purchasing the tapes for their own promotional campaigns.

- Coaching. Audiovisual resources to enhance introductory-level coaching clinics and to promote involvement in amateur sports. Coaching philosophy and skills can be conveyed in a case study format in which a volunteer coach displays his or her techniques. (Discussion of the need for increased participation of women in all areas of sports organizations, including playing, coaching, managing, administering, etc., could be included.)

TREND: CULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND THE CULTURE INDUSTRY WILL CONTINUE TO GROW.

One indication of this can be seen in the 13% increase between 1981 and 1984 in the number of tickets sold to live theatre, music, and dance performances. The Ontario film industry expenditures, as an example, increased from $95 million in 1985 to $102 million in the first seven months of 1986. While the total Ontario labour force grew 33% between 1971 and 1981, the segment of the labour force working in cultural activities increased almost twice that amount (65%) to include approximately 138,000 people.

In a recent document, "Strategic Management: 1986 and Beyond," the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Culture expects "the continuing growth in demand for cultural and multicultural services" and "pressure for access to quality cultural and multicultural facilities and services in all communities and regions of the Province." The federal task force on funding of the arts to the year 2000 recommends an incremental growth of five percent per year or 1.5% above economic growth.

Growing interest in fashion, one aspect of popular culture, is reflected in our clothing purchases. In Toronto, expenditures on women's clothing increased 24% in only two years (1982 to 1984), while total family expenditures increased 16% in this same period.

Implications for Individuals

Expanding opportunities for those who can afford to enjoy cultural activities.

Expanding opportunities to work in the culture industry, e.g., the growing number of community festivals and events, theatre companies, music, art, shows, film, televison and media productions, companies that provide design and support services.

A growing variety of cultural options and opportunities, and at the same time, new pressures to respond to, consider, explore, or actively ignore new cultural forms such as rock videos, video games, pornographic videos and magazines, new fashions.

Programming Ideas

- Behind the Scenes in the Performing and Media Arts. Programming that takes viewers behind the scenes of cultural events and activities to show all of the areas of work involved in producing plays, concerts, films, television shows, including set design and construction, costumes, lighting, art direction, continuity, stage managing, and so on.

- Community Culture. Programming about how communities maintain their culture, preserve their language or heritage, or celebrate their identity or local culture.

- The Art of Design. An historical or comparative view of design showing how styles in each era or culture are reflected in art, architecture, film, fashion, advertising.

- Technology in the Arts. Programming that explores the incorporation of electronic techniques and representations in art, music, media, and the expectations for the future. Tom Sherman at the Canada Council, Media Arts Section (formerly involved in the production of Fast Forward) has close contact with artists and organizations using information technologies for creative expression and communication.

TREND: CONCERN WITH THE QUALITY OF AIR, WATER, AND FOOD WE CONSUME IS GROWING.

A Spring 1986 poll (Environics) showed that 80% of Ontarians expressed 'a great deal' of concern about their environment, exceeding for the first time the concern with unemployment (74%). Acid rain is seen as a very important problem by 76% of Ontario residents and fully 86% say the problem of toxic chemicals is very important.

On August 9, 1986 a series of articles in the Globe and Mail begins "For the first time in Canada's history, a provincial government is placing environmental concerns high on its political agenda." The present Liberal government sees its concern with the environment as one of the key issues leading to its election and has made Minister of the Environment James Bradley a senior member of the Ontario Cabinet. Since this government took office, stricter environmental protection regulations have been adopted, charges have been laid against Ontario Hydro and GO Transit for violations of regulations, increased penalties for violations have been enacted, and a Municipal-Industrial Strategy for Abatement has been proposed.

A Greenpeace worker identified the greenhouse effect on climatic conditions and the problems of nuclear waste disposal as the environmental issues that will attract noticeably more attention in the next three to five years. Current environmental problems will receive growing attention as well--acid rain resulting from fuel combustion, radioactivity from nuclear power plants (now found for example in the ground water near seven U.S. plants), and the use and disposal of toxic chemicals in farming and manufacturing.

Implications for Individuals

Concern about the environment is moving people to join community environment groups. The Ontario Environment Network has grown to include 228 groups.

People are willing to pay for a cleaner environment--84% believe that government should require industries to reduce air and water pollution, even if jobs are lost (although most would allow controls to be phased in if that would save jobs). In Atlantic Canada, nearly half of the respondents to a 1985 Environment Canada survey were willing to pay $120 a year more on the electricity bills to help fight acid rain.

Interest in organic farming and gardening is growing. There are now 15 organic farming associations in Canada compared to only five two years ago. Membership in the national association increased from 700 to 1,300 in the same period. There are 250,000 gardeners in Metro Toronto, the vast majority of whom do not use chemical fertilizers or pesticides.

Programming Ideas

- Controlling Your Environment. Case studies of communities and groups who have organized to have a say in shaping or changing their environment. The 228 groups listed in the Ontario Environment Network reflect a wide range of concerns, from smoking in the workplace to nuclear waste disposal and toxic substances in the water supply. The series would show the conflicting perspectives of residents or workers, industry, and governments, and would describe the strategies used in each case to express concerns, i.e., organizing community support, gathering information, fundraising, approaching local industry, and lobbying government. Support materials would include information on how to organize and lobby, and avenues for networking around environmental issues.

- Organic Farming Techniques. Show how low-cost, non-chemical techniques such as small fields, crop rotation, companion planting, organic pesticides, and organic fertilizers can be used profitably on a commercial farm.

- Home Gardening. Show the variety of interesting and unusual gardens people in Ontario (including many recent immigrants from all over the world) have created in their backyards, frontyards, balconies, sundecks, window boxes, and roofs, emphasizing the diversity of plants, gardening techniques, and natural fertilizers and pesticides. Support materials could provide information about planning and designing a garden, sources of seeds, soil testing and preparation, pest control, and climate.

TREND: AS THE TRANSITION TO AN INFORMATION-BASED ECONOMY PROCEEDS, PEOPLE'S CONCERN WITH THE CONSEQUENCES FOR SOCIETY REMAIN STRONG.

The machine capabilities created through electronic technology and the economic revolution that has resulted are changing the ways we do things in our institutions, our culture, and our personal lives. The popularity of observers such as Toffler, Naisbitt, and more recently, Canadian author Robert Russel (Winning the Future) indicates the widespread interest in understanding these changes.

Implications for Individuals

People will continue to seek information and understanding about new technologies and about their implications for the future. They will strive to keep up with new developments in technology and with resulting economic, social, and cultural trends. Interest is also strong in the impact of technology in such areas as music, art, and the media.

Programming Ideas

- Upcoming Developments in Technology. Provide information about recent and expected technological developments and their potential uses and impact, for example, developments in language recognition and generation, and potential applications.

- Images of the Future. Exploration of images and possibilities for the next century. Canadian science fiction can be used as a source of scenarios of a world where, for example, the wealthy live in orbit, communicating with extensive networks on earth that are maintained by the less fortunate left behind, or a world where people connect directly with electronic networks and become part of the computer. Embedded in such visions is a growing awareness that it is not the technology itself that is problematic but the relationships between technology and people and among people. Combinations of drama and discussion could address the broad issues of our future. A recent collection of Canadian science fiction stories called Tesseracts could be a useful resource.

- The Influence of the Media in Our Personal Lives. Consideration of how the electronic media, particularly television, communicate messages and the impact these messages have in shaping our psychology, growth, social lives, and culture. A soon-to-be-published book by Eric McLuhan called Laws of the Media may provide insight in this area.

TREND: AS NEW ELECTRONIC APPLICATIONS APPEAR AND PRICES ON LAST YEAR'S GADGETS FALL, CONSUMERS WILL CONTINUE TO INCREASE THEIR USE OF PRODUCTS THAT INCORPORATE ELECTRONIC COMPONENTS.

The magic of making things happen at the push of a button will keep extending personal capacities further. Increasingly sophisticated and affordable equipment such as mobile phone systems, electronic features to simplify car operation and maintenance, home security systems, and compact disc players will become more widely dispersed. New products and capabilities will continue to appear.

Implications for Individuals

Expenditures on new electronic devices and home entertainment equipment and services will continue to grow (from $265 million in Ontario in 1982 for television sets, stereos, VCRs, video cameras, pay TV). An increase in Canadian expenditures on home computers is expected, from $36.4 million in 1985 to $87.5 million in 1989 (Evans Research).

Programming Ideas

- Using New Technologies. Information and guidance/advice/instruction for consumers about new and expected technological developments--compact disc, cellular phones, electronic features in automobiles, home security systems.

- Making Home Movies. Learning to produce good home videotapes that record family events and children's growth or that tell a story, instructing in such production essentials as lighting, camera angles, and editing videotape.

TREND: THE SCIENCE COUNCIL OF CANADA HAS IDENTIFIED SEVERAL RESEARCH PRIORITIES.

In addition to the continuing development of information technologies in Canada, areas identified as priorities for research by a Science Council survey include:

- Aquaculture
- Advanced industrial materials
- Plastics
- Biotechnology
- Medical devices
- Food irradiation

Recent government announcements indicate increasing support for space research as well.

Even newer than electronics-based technologies are photon-based lasers, optical fibres for data transmission, and optical data storage technology. The race to build the first optical computer is on--AT&T look a step in that direction by producing the first optical equivalent of a transistor, and in Japan a hybrid microchip that combines aspects of electronics and optics is being developed.

Implications for Individuals

Developments in areas related to health care and genetic engineering have implications for individuals and their families.

Research concerning food sources (aquaculture) and processing (food irradiation) as well as information about chemicals and their human consequences are of immediate interest to people.

Programming Ideas

o Advances in Science. Exploring one area of scientific research each year and considering the social implications, for example:

  - Advances in medical science such as genetic engineering, new transplant techniques, new medical devices, test-tube fertilization and embryo transfer techniques, and technology-based life support systems; related ethical issues around surrogate parenting, neonatal care, euthanasia; and politics of establishing limits and setting priorities for funding.

- Advances concerning food and nutrition, improving feed production and preservation techniques, and social questions around food consumption and distribution.

- Advances in photon-based technologies.